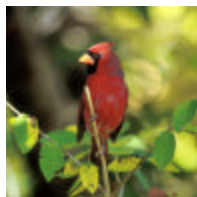


OFB



IN THE NEWS

**Editors: Carol Conley
Joan Ousley**



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EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH BUFFA HANSE

By Derrick Cox

Since joining the McDowell Rehabilitation Center in June 2000 as the Braille and Audio-Equipment instructor, Buffa Hanse has quickly become an invaluable staff member. This was expressed at a recent graduation when a Braille student thanked her for “teaching me to read again.” Buffa continually seeks out creative and innovative ways to teach Braille. She constantly makes sure that she teaches so that each individual student has the chance to learn Braille and Audio Equipment, yet be challenged within their own abilities to reach just beyond their current grasp. Although she sometimes works with students one-on-one, Buffa usually works with students in groups, so that she can increase the number of people who have a chance to learn Braille and increase their literacy skills. When a student has the ability, Buffa motivates more advanced Braille students to teach Braille to beginning students during class-time and in the evenings. This student and student-teacher arrangement benefits both consumers through increased knowledge of and use of Braille. Buffa’s concern for and commitment to each student extends beyond instruction in Braille and Audio Equipment to concern for their total functioning as a

human being. Buffa has built and maintains a large, nation-wide network of blind people working in various fields. When a student expresses interest in a particular vocational area, Buffa willingly places the student in contact with blind professionals who have experience in the student’s vocational interest area. Many students have been grateful for and benefited from Buffa’s advice and guidance regarding their vocational goals and life goals. In addition to her work with and dedication to consumers, Buffa was an active participant in the agency’s leadership program. Her leadership project resulted in updated information on consumer self-employment being added to the VR Counselors manual. Beyond her work with the OFB, Buffa is a tireless advocate for Braille literacy, preservation of Braille libraries, and efforts to change what it means to be blind. Moreover, Buffa is an active member of her faith community where she arranged and had her bar mitzvah this past March. Recently, another student working with Buffa described her as “amazing,” which about says it all. All things considered, Buffa is an excellent member of the McDowell Rehabilitation Center and OFB staff, and worthy of distinction as the employee of the month.

CONSUMER SUCCESS STORY

By Mike Hall

Matthew Wampler moved to Kentucky from his native state of Virginia to live on his own, hopefully attend college, and one day find employment.

Matt was living in a motel room in Pikeville when he began receiving help with finding public housing, career counseling, financial assistance with college classes, recorded books, and a computer through the Kentucky Office for the Blind's Prestonsburg office.

OFB, located on Thursdays on the campus of Big Sandy Community College at Pikeville, works closely with Pike County consumers. His rehabilitation counselor, Mike Hall, nominated Matt for the Education at Work Scholarship, which was presented on July 21 to Matt. He and Mike attended the scholarship ceremony at the Capital Rotunda in Frankfort.

Wampler is currently majoring in counseling, hoping to obtain his Human Services Degree at Big Sandy Community College and Technical School. Matt has also applied for services at the Big Sandy Community Action WIA Training Program and hopes to attend Pikeville College upon graduation from Big Sandy Community College.

Matt writes, "I really appreciate all the help that I have gotten from the Kentucky Office for the Blind, WIA, and Big Sandy Community College and Technical School. I hope this training and scholarship will someday lead to me obtaining a career in Counseling."

Barren River Area Development Workforce Development June Annual Meeting

By Barbara Miller

Nancy Tooley and her consumer Dwight Treadway received an award from BRAD for his accomplishments. Nancy partnered with Green Thumb in placing Dwight into employment. He works for Nations Drugs in Bowling Green and his employer, Steve Sheldon, states he is both an excellent and valuable employee.

"Learning from our Consumer Groups"

By Barbara Miller

Attending a National Convention is certainly an experience and an opportunity to learn skills and information that are invaluable. This month the National Federation for the Blind met in Louisville, Kentucky, again for their annual national conference as Louisville does roll out the red carpet. Commissioner Laura Owens and Executive Director Steve Johnson welcomed the large delegation and Steve talked about Kentucky's "Unbridled Spirit," which certainly fit well with this year's conference theme. They were well received and many of our staff attended various sessions, luncheons, and banquet and gained knowledge that is useful in their jobs. The exhibit halls were full of the latest in technology and products and information that you only get the opportunity to see at an event such as this. Out of the 29 scholarships awarded, two Kentucky students received substantial college scholarships.

The American Council for the Blind met the same week in Las Vegas; yes, it was "Vegas," for their National Conference and Barbara was fortunate to represent the agency. What a treat to sit with the large delegation from Kentucky and learn about such topics as advances in talking ATM's and sleep studies, new directions as to recording texts, and meeting other state directors, talking with individuals from all over the country about services in their state and the opportunity to meet the many vendors. The exhibit floor was almost overwhelming with new products and information as well as the opportunity to try them out. When talking with vendors, they always ask where you live. When you say Kentucky, they come back with, "Do you know Jenny Tyree?" It is exciting and makes you proud. So many experiences to share with staff and also simply being able to enjoy the fellowship! It is wonderful to know that you are truly welcome and treated

simply as one of the group. One proud Kentuckian was awarded a full scholarship and the delegation cheered as he spoke his acceptance.

We, as an agency, can learn many things from our consumer groups and former consumers who have become successfully employed. They can help us solve many of our most difficult problems. They care about each other and are willing to be mentors for blind individuals. They are on the leading edge as to what is new in the field of blindness. Listening can be a valuable lesson or skill. Let's always make time to listen.

Kurzweil Technologies and National Federation of the Blind Premiere the World's First Portable Reading Machine for the Blind

By Chase Forrester

Kurzweil Technologies, Inc. (KTI) and the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) introduced the world's first portable reading machine for the blind last week at the NFB's 2005 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

The portable reading machine, which can fit in a user's shirt pocket, can read print and text materials as users go through their normal daily routine. It converts print into human-sounding speech and can read handouts at meetings, signs on a wall, text on packages, and electronic displays. The hardware consists of a consumer digital camera with a standard PocketPC, so the hardware cost is expected to benefit from the rapid improvement of price-performance of consumer electronics. The camera and pocket computer are held together by a snap-in case.

The technology was developed by Ray Kurzweil and his colleagues at KTI in close collaboration with the NFB, which is organizing a comprehensive testing program with blind users. Ray Kurzweil

was the principal developer of the first print-to-speech reading machine for the blind, also developed in close collaboration with the NFB. Ray Kurzweil noted that "The new unit is 10,000 times smaller than the original 1976 reading machine, yet the computer it's using is 2,000 times more powerful." This new portable unit is expected to be available for sale in 2006.

NFB Director of Strategic Projects Jim Gashel demonstrated the reading machine to an enthusiastic audience of more than 2,000 blind delegates. "There was cheering for several minutes while the machine read the document," said Kurzweil, who followed the demo with a talk explaining the machine, KTI's collaboration with NFB on the project, and the future of this technology.

The portable reader provides feedback to the user on what it sees, guiding the user to properly frame reading material. It can report, for example, if one of the edges of a document is out of view. It is also capable of stitching together portions of a document from multiple pictures taken by the camera. It can detect and correct any degree of document rotation and is insensitive to three degrees of freedom of image tilt or rotation. The software also includes image-enhancement techniques to compensate for uneven illumination and the low quality optics of inexpensive consumer cameras. Future version will include scene-recognition capabilities to locate objects such as chairs, lamps and people.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PAULETTE VENHOFF ON HER PRESENTATION PROPOSAL "How to Teach Visually Impaired and Blind Adults"

We are happy to inform you that the proposal you submitted, How to Teach Visually Impaired and Blind Adults, has been selected for inclusion in the Kentucky Adult Education Conference to be held

September 19-21, 2005, at the Downtown Louisville Marriott. Please be sure to keep these dates available on your calendar and we will let you know in the very near future an exact date and time for your presentation.

We are looking forward to your presentation in September.

Thank you.

Melissa Wireman
Kentucky Adult Education

HOW DID HE KNOW TOO MUCH OXYGEN WAS BAD?

By Ann Burge

Recently, while reading a Lions Club International magazine, an article caught my attention. Dr. Arnall Patz will receive the Association's highest award for his pioneering work with management and treatment of diabetic retinopathy and with his colleagues developed one of the first lasers used to treat eye disease at the Retinal Vascular Center and as Director of the Wilmer Eye Institute, both located at Johns-Hopkins University in Baltimore. What was even more interesting was that Dr. Patz, in 1956 and at age 32, made his first major scientific contribution, proving that the practice of giving high levels of oxygen to premature infants was causing an epidemic of blindness in those babies. What was then called retrolental fibroplasias (RLF) is now called retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) and is rarely seen in premature infants today and in very few applicants for our services...Thanks to Dr. Patz.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are PROUD to ANNOUNCE the following individuals have received notification that they have passed their

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) test and can now proudly add these initials after their name. Remember these individuals and several others are the first graduates of the University of Kentucky Distance Learning Graduate Program along with several others that will test this fall for their CRC. This is a real accomplishment personally for each individual and for the agency, as we are measured on this standard by RSA. Way to Go Everyone!

Chad Hunt	Nancy Tooley
Dorothy Brame	Mitsy Knight
Ron Devillez	Denise Hicks

RETIREMENTS FOR JULY

By Barbara Miller

Happy times, sad times? We have four individuals retiring and we wish to say a fond goodbye. Mary Ellen Cameron, Janet Alexander, Marsha Howard and Donna Smith are all career employees that have given so much of their lives to the mission of the agency; ensuring blind Kentuckians have excellent opportunities to become independent and reach successful employment goals. Our small agency resembles a family and, as members leave, it is a personal loss. Others will take over their work duties but never be able to take their place. For a long time it will be, "Well, Mary Ellen could have figured out how to replace my worn out chair" or "Janet knew how to manage moving funds to get me more caseload monies" or "Wish we could call Donna because she knew how", or "Marsha would have known best what to do." We will miss these individuals, miss their specialized, unique skills and how they have made our work lives so very pleasant. As they enter retirement, whether they are sitting by the pool, sleeping late, staying up all night watching TV, traveling, visiting with friends and relatives or beginning a new career, we hope they will stay in touch and take away good memories of happy times at OFB.

There will be no goodbyes for us, my very special friends; I wish you happy, safe and well, until we meet again.

By Marsha Howard

It has been my distinct pleasure to work alongside some of the most talented and professional folks while completing my career with state government at the Office for the Blind. I want to thank you for your help – with listening, mentoring, and collaborating. I know that your job is hectic and demanding. But this never prevents each and every one of you from being available when your expertise or helping hand is needed in a pinch. My heartfelt thanks goes out to you. You are among my closest and dearest friends and I feel truly lucky to have known you.

I feel real fortunate to be able to retire and have so many opportunities on the horizon for a brand new direction. However, my immediate plans are to enjoy my beautiful granddaughter who delights me beyond belief. I love the sound of her laughter. She has taught me to explore and discover with brand new insight.

It looks as though our paths will diverge here, but know that you have made a difference in my life. I wish you all the best as you continue to enhance opportunities for Kentuckians. I sincerely believe we have the ability to “color our world” and give new meaning and direction...So, in parting, I want to share a little poem from a children’s book that I hope causes you to smile and continue to challenge the short-sighted folks of this world.

“Listen to the mustn’ts, child. Listen to the don’ts.

“Listen to the shouldn’ts, the impossibles, the won’ts.

“Listen to the never-haves, then listen close to me;

“Anything can happen, child. Anything can be.”

~~Shel Silverstein

Greetings to OFB Staff,

I just want you all to know that I think you are an outstanding group of rehabilitation professionals. It has been my pleasure to work with you and I have enjoyed the last five years. I am leaving the Office for the Blind on July 29 to take a promotional opportunity at the Department for Mental Health and Mental Retardation. I have learned a great deal from you and thank you so much for all that you have shared with me. I am so blessed to take so many special memories with me.

I will miss you but I know that employment and independent living for Kentuckians who are blind and visually impaired are in the best hands - YOURS.

Take care of yourselves and each other.

CJ Jones, HRD Coordinator

Just wanted to say thank you to all my friends and co-workers. It doesn’t seem possible that 27 years have passed since I came to the “Bureau” for the Blind. I was hired as a temporary just to answer the phone for 6 months. It’s apparent that after I got here I just couldn’t leave. We have always had a terrific staff and it’s been a joy to work with each of you, but it’s time to move on. I’m looking forward to the many new adventures ahead of me as a retiree. My immediate plans are to laze by the pool and sleep late. Later this fall I plan to do some traveling with family and friends. I thank those of you that were able to come to the reception honoring the retirements of Janet and me. Your cards, gifts and warm wishes were very much appreciated. I’ll not say goodbye, but see you later. Always your friend,
Mary Ellen

HEALTH CORNER

Submitted by Pam Thompson, RN

No Soft Drinks Before Bedtime

The nearly one in two American adults plagued by heartburn may want to steer clear of carbonated soft drinks in the hours before bedtime. A new study links soda consumption to troublesome acid reflux at night.

"That's no small matter, because acid reflux during the night tends to be more harmful for patients - it's associated more with complications, such as narrowing of the esophagus, alterations of the esophagus and most importantly, cancerous changes of the esophagus and esophageal cancer. That's a big price to pay for a can of Coke," said lead researcher Dr. Ronnie Fass, a professor of medicine at the University of Arizona, Tucson.

His team's study, published in the May issue of Chest, also found strong associations between troubling nighttime heartburn and the use of the benzodiazepine sleeping aids such as Ativan, Valium or Xanax.

HUNGRY???

When you get the munchies, go for a snack that packs a nutrient punch and keeps you satisfied.

Easy-to-Please Yogurt Parfait

½ cup lightly drained canned peach slices
1 cup vanilla flavored yogurt
½ cup raisin-bran cereal

Layer peaches, yogurt and cereal in a glass. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate until ready to eat.

FOOD SITE RECIPE OF THE MONTH

BLACKBERRY COBBLER

Ingredients:

2 cups Blackberries
2 cups All-purpose Flour
2 tsp. Baking Powder
1 1/2 cups Granulated Sugar
2 sticks Margarine, melted and slightly cooled
2 cups Milk

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350-F degrees and lightly spray a 9-inch by 13-inch baking pan with non-stick oil. Set aside for use later.

In a large mixing bowl, blend together flour, baking powder, and sugar until thoroughly combined. Mix in the melted margarine, and blend well. Add the milk and stir until smooth. The mixture will be very thin, but it will bake to a cake-like texture.

Pour the mixture into the prepared baking pan. Evenly distribute the blackberries over the top of the mixture, and bake until well browned around the edges, about 30-45 minutes.

The finished cobbler should be golden brown on top. Serve warm topped with ice cream.

This recipe can be prepared and baked ahead of service time, then warmed in the microwave just prior to serving.



8/12 Gay Pannell
8/15 Tonia Boyd
8/16 Dorris Stidham
8/21 Norma McCormick
8/27 Vicki Staggs